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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 373rd meeting
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Chair: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, Jakarta, 14 and 15 December 2015, and United Nations Civil Society Forum on the Question of Palestine, Jakarta, 16 December 2015

Briefing on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people

Other matters

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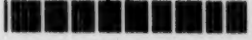

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

2. **The Chair** said that, on 16 October 2015, the Security Council had held a closed meeting on the situation on the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. In addition, on 20 October, the Secretary-General had met with the President of the State of Palestine and the Prime Minister of Israel with a view to defusing tensions between the two countries. On 22 October, the Security Council had held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at which Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua), Vice-Chair, had delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee.

3. The Committee had been established exactly 40 years earlier with the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 3376 (XXX). In the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Committee to recommend a programme of implementation designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination. In 1976, the Committee had submitted such a programme to the Security Council, but, unfortunately, it had not been adopted. Since its establishment, the Committee had supported efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, organized meetings around the globe to raise awareness of the question of Palestine and annually celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November at the United Nations and its offices around the world. However, it had not been intended that the Committee should continue its work for so long. The expectation had been that the conflict would be quickly resolved. Unfortunately, the conflict continued and the work of the Committee was still urgently needed to achieve a two-State solution.

4. Recent achievements included the according of non-member observer State status in the United Nations to the State of Palestine; the declaration by the General Assembly of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and the raising of the flag of the State of Palestine at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The raising of the flag was more than a symbolic gesture: it marked a new victory for Palestinians in the quest to recover their dignity. However, such achievements must not blind the international community to the disastrous situation of the Palestinians.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

5. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the popular uprising led by Palestinian youth was in its second month. Some 80 Palestinian civilians, many of whom were women and children, had been killed and 3,000 others been injured by live and rubber-coated bullets. Another 6,000 Palestinians had been detained, including hundreds of children. Many videos had been discovered that documented the execution-style killings and savage interrogations of Palestinians by Israeli security forces, including the torture of a 13-year-old boy. The uprising had started in the Old City of Jerusalem around the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif, and had then engulfed the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the communities of Palestinian Arabs who were citizens of Israel.

6. The popular uprising had been caused by the continued extremism demonstrated by the Israeli rightist Government and the settlers it supported in a myriad of ways, including with weapons. Israeli extremists, including members of the Knesset, had led groups into the Al-Aqsa Mosque and raised the Israeli flag causing extreme offence to Palestinians, who had naturally responded by defending those sacred sites. If the occupying Power could not ensure peace and security in East Jerusalem, where it had total control, it should recognize that it could not continue to suppress the Palestinian people. The only logical way to ensure peace and security for all was for Israel to end its occupation of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. The use of security measures against Palestinians was bound to fail because Israel could not break the will of the Palestinian people. In many cases, Palestinian youth were fighting with nothing more than stones and knives, to which Israeli security forces were responding with brutal violence. When a problem involved Jews, Israeli soldiers knew how to injure and not kill, but in the case of Palestinians, they were savage and trigger-happy.

7. The uprising had brought the question of Palestine back to centre stage. Those who believed that empty promises by the Israeli Government to respect the historic status quo regarding the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif would bring the situation under control were mistaken. Having allowed even members of his own Government to challenge that status quo, the Israeli Prime Minister could not guarantee that the historic agreement regarding those two holy sites would be respected.

8. The international community, including the Security Council, must take immediate action to ensure that Israeli military units were withdrawn from conflict areas, including East Jerusalem, particularly the areas of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Haram al-Sharif. In the long term, the international community and the Council must ensure that the historic agreement on the status of those holy sites was maintained. One way to achieve that goal was to deploy international observers in several parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a buffer between Israeli military forces and extremists, on the one hand, and worshipers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the residents of East Jerusalem, on the other. The international community and the United Nations, including the Security Council, must address the issue of protection seriously, with a view to disarming all settlers as called for in Security Council resolution 904 (1994).

9. Removing Israeli forces, addressing with the issue of protection and guaranteeing the historic status quo were measures that could lead to de-escalation and start a new political process to end occupation and ensure the independence of the State of Palestine. Indeed, such measures were included in the draft resolutions proposed by France and New Zealand that were currently being considered by the Security Council. He wondered whether the Security Council was ready to shoulder its responsibility by beginning a serious discussion on providing international protection for Palestinian civilians. The Council had, in fact, addressed the issue of protection previously in resolutions its 605 (1987), 672 (1990), 673 (1990) and 681 (1990). In addition, the United Nations Secretariat had prepared a study on providing international protection for Palestinians, which the Secretary-General had transmitted to the Security Council in October 2015.

10. He hoped that the international community would work collectively to adopt a resolution in the Security Council that set out a timetable for concluding negotiations and ending the occupation; the basis of a just political settlement rooted in international law and the parameters established by the United Nations; and a collective process that involved Israel and Palestine, the permanent members of the Security Council and other important players, including Arab countries. To that end, the Arab ministers for foreign affairs had met in Riyadh on 9 November 2015 and adopted several resolutions in which they called for international protection for the Palestinian people and for the Security Council to adopt a resolution in that regard. If the Council failed to adopt such a resolution, the ministers had said that they would consider calling for an emergency session of the General Assembly.

11. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), Vice-Chair, said it was unfortunate that after 40 years of work by the Committee, the situation had not improved and was in fact worsening. Nonetheless, the international community must continue its efforts to resolve the question of Palestine. It was disappointing that there were still divisions regarding the issue, with some leaders ignoring the plight of the Palestinians. Committee members should continue to appeal to the international community, apply pressure when possible and use the platforms created by the United Nations to raise awareness. It was also necessary to work with academics and activists who were on the ground in order to raise awareness of current issues.

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

Draft resolution: Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Draft resolution: Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

Draft resolution: Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Draft resolution: Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

12. **The Chair**, introducing the four draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 38, said that they had been updated to reflect recent political and other developments. He drew the Committee's attention to some of the new provisions relating to the efforts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

(UNCTAD) to report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/20; the Committee's efforts and activities in commemoration of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the request that the Secretary-General should continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work; and the request that the Department of Public Information should continue its initiatives, which effectively contributed to an international atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of peace efforts. The draft resolutions also included an expression of concern regarding the situation on the ground, in particular all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation.

13. The delegation of the State of Palestine had held consultations with various regional groups regarding the draft resolutions, which had been approved by the Bureau.

14. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), Vice-Chair, said that the support of the international community was necessary for the Committee to continue its work. His delegation supported the recommendations presented in the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and called for the Committee to be allocated the resources it needed to enhance its performance. It was also necessary to adequately fund the Special Information Programme, as it was crucial for disseminating information and little could be accomplished without it. His delegation believed that the hardships being endured by the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory should have been further emphasized in the draft resolutions.

15. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that while it was necessary to maintain the support of as many countries and political groups as possible for the draft resolutions, it was difficult to address developments on the ground objectively and still garner the necessary number votes. His delegation hoped to maintain the unanimous vote of the European countries on at least 13 of the 16 resolutions related to the question of Palestine, particularly those of a political nature. It was necessary to address the complicated financial needs related to the resolutions, especially where there were new programme budget implications that might make a country vote against the resolutions. It was necessary to think creatively to obtain the resources needed while maintaining international supports.

16. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, there were six programmes related to the question of Palestine that had financial implications. At a minimum, it would be necessary to maintain the existing budget levels for those programmes, so that they could carry out their mandates. As the Fifth Committee adopted all resolutions by consensus, an agreement must be reached among all stakeholders.

17. *The draft resolutions were adopted.*

International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, Jakarta, 14 and 15 December 2015, and United Nations Civil Society Forum on the Question of Palestine, Jakarta, 16 December 2015 (working paper No. 7)

18. **The Chair** drew attention to working paper No. 7, which contained the provisional programmes of the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, to be held in Jakarta on 14 and 15 December 2015, and of the United Nations Civil Society Forum on the Question of Palestine, to be held also in Jakarta on 16 December 2015. The events would provide up-to-date information on the current situation in Jerusalem to policy and decision-makers, civil society and the general public, with a view to enhancing international advocacy for a halt to the methodical demographic changes that were occurring in East Jerusalem, especially in and around the Old City.

19. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programmes.

20. *It was so decided.*

Briefing on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people

21. **Mr. Elkhafif** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/20, had requested UNCTAD to report on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. However, those costs were so great that it was not possible to address the subject in a single report. On the other hand, there could be no just and lasting solution to the plight of the Palestinian people without

an accurate assessment of the harm that had been caused by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

22. The Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit of UNCTAD was established in 1985 with a mandate to assess the impact of Israeli policy on the Palestinian economy. In the period from 1994, the year in which the Palestinian Authority had been established, to 2000, the year in which the second intifada had begun, the Unit's reports had been positive and had focused on assessing the potential of the Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza. However, after the start of the second intifada, the tone of those studies had changed and their focus had shifted to assessing the cost of occupation. Unfortunately, because of its limited resources and the enormity of the task, the Unit had not yet been able to produce a comprehensive and definitive study of the cost of occupation. Nonetheless, UNCTAD was the United Nations agency that should conduct such a study and had the expertise do so; lack of resources was the only obstacle that stood in its way.

23. **Mr. Kubursi** (Professor Emeritus, McMaster University), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the Palestinian economy in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza had been viable before Israel had occupied those territories in 1967. Up to that time, the Palestinian economy had been capable of sustaining a growing population with a per capita income of approximately $1,500 in 2004 prices. Regrettably, a previously middle-income economy was now on the verge of collapse, along with the population it supported.

24. The situation in Gaza was particularly dire. According to a recent UNCTAD report, the population of Gaza was living in unsustainable conditions. The unemployment rate in Gaza stood at 45 per cent, and 63 per cent of Gazan youth were unemployed, the highest proportion in the world. Nearly all of the Gaza water supply was unfit for human consumption, and the electricity supply was sporadic. Moreover, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had been growing until 2006, was now in a dizzying decline.

25. It was vital to have an accurate assessment of the losses the Palestinian people had sustained as a result of the Israeli occupation, as that would help to paint a clear picture of the difficult circumstances in which they lived and how those circumstances had compromised their ability to maintain a decent standard of living, let alone survive. It would also offer the international community the opportunity to raise the cost of occupation for Israel, which had been able to continue its occupation with impunity. According to Justice Richard Goldstone, who served in 2009 as head of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, the circumstances in which the Palestinians found themselves were rooted in the occupation. Quantifying the economic losses sustained by the Palestinians as a result of occupation would help to establish a range of figures that could be referred to in the course of negotiations on a final and just settlement of the question of Palestine.

26. There were two approaches that could be used to measure the cost of occupation: the income approach and the utility approach. Under the income approach, economists would attempt to determine the stream of income or revenues that people and businesses had been denied because of the occupation or breach of international law, what it would take to compensate those losses and how to restore conditions to a state that would enable people to derive the same level of revenue and income that they had been denied. Although the income approach could provide fixed figures, it could not cover the entire range of difficulties that people under occupation endured nor the injuries they suffered. The utility approach was far better because it also took into account psychological suffering. Adopting such an approach was supported by prior experience. For example, under the *Wiedergutmachung* (reparations) programme established by Germany in the wake of the Second World War, Jews were not only able to claim compensation for income and property losses, but also for the psychological suffering they had endured under the Nazis.

27. The economic rationale typically offered for reparations was that if individuals were left unimpeded, they would arrange their economic situations and utilize their scarce resources so as to maximize their advantage. The economic cost of any damage was synonymous with the cost of undoing the losses suffered therefrom and returning the situation to that which had existed before the losses had been incurred.

28. It was necessary to assign a monetary value to harm the Palestinians had suffered that could be measured and updated regularly and systematically.

Many programmes, several of which were run by UNCTAD and the World Bank, were currently attempting to do that, but on an ad hoc basis. It would be more appropriate to create an institutional mechanism that could systematically and continuously monitor, tally and document the harm caused by the Israeli occupation and thereby provide a credible assessment of the cost of occupation for the Palestinian people.

29. There were many legal precedents that supported the right of the Palestinian people to be compensated for losses suffered as a result of Israeli occupation of their territories. In the 1928 Factory at Chorzów case, the Permanent Court of International Justice had ruled that reparation must be made for violations of international law. General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which the Assembly had consistently reaffirmed, was very clear about the right of the Palestinian people to return and to receive compensation. The rights of the Palestinians were also supported by the Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, also known as the Pinheiro Principles, which had been applied in numerous situations, including in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, Afghanistan and Cyprus; the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and the practice of the United Nations Compensation Commission, which had been created to process claims for losses and damage suffered as a result of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

30. It was necessary to develop and institutionalize a mechanism within the United Nations that would give teeth to the relevant resolutions of the General assembly and provide an evidence-based, substantiated and systematic tally of the cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

31. **Mr. Elkhafif** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that UNCTAD, the World Bank and the Palestinians themselves had done most of the work on assessing the cost of occupation. According to a 2006 UNCTAD study, the Palestinian economy had lost approximately $8.4 billion of GDP and one third of its capital stock in the period between 2000, when the second intifada had erupted, and 2005, owing to the tightening of the Israel blockade.

32. Since 1967, some 2.5 million fruitful trees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been uprooted or destroyed. Meanwhile, only 35 per cent of irrigable Palestinian land was actually irrigated because Israel consumed approximately 82 per cent of the groundwater, a situation that cost the Palestinian economy 110,000 jobs, or about 10 per cent of GDP, every year. The Palestinians had also lost 10 per cent of the most fertile land in the West Bank because of the construction of the separation wall by Israel, a fact that was not reflected in the records kept by the United Nations Register of Damage because it assessed loss at the household level. Of the 2 million dunums of Palestinian rangeland, only 31 per cent were available for grazing because of the occupation. Moreover, Gazans were not allowed to fish more than 6 nautical miles from the coastline, a distance that was far less than the 20 nautical miles allowed under the 1994 Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area.

33. The situation was made worse by the extremely limited ability of Palestinian policymakers to stimulate the economy and make it productive. As much as 20 per cent of Palestinian public revenue was being leaked to the Israeli treasury because of the shortcomings of the Protocol on Economic Relations concluded by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in 1994. In addition to having been under a complete economic siege for the last eight years, Gaza had also endured three full-scale Israeli military operations in the past six years that had caused enormous destruction. The value of the assets damaged and GDP lost in the last two of those operations was estimated at $3.2 billion. According to a study that had been conducted by the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and the Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem (ARIJ) and presented at the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Cairo on 6 and 7 February 2012, the Israeli occupation cost the Palestinian economy approximately $7 billion per year. The World Bank had also carried out a study of the situation in Area C, which made up approximately 62 per cent of the West Bank and was basically under the control of Israel.

34. Yet all those studies had simply scratched the surface and were just the beginning of the massive effort that was required to properly and accurately assess the cost of the Israeli occupation from the moment it had begun in 1967.

35. **Mr. Kubursi** (Professor Emeritus, McMaster University), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that it was important not to get lost in the details and to focus, instead, on the root cause of the economic situation of the Palestinians. According to Sara Roy, the distinguished economist from Harvard University, Israel had essentially de-developed the Occupied Palestinian Territory. By contrast, the accepted norm among States and within the United Nations was to empower people and expand the choices available to them through development. The Israeli occupation had derailed the Palestinians' ability to progress by undermining their capacity to develop. Israeli anthropologist and activist Jeff Halper had observed that the occupying authorities had put in place a complex matrix of control in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that had enabled Israel to warehouse the Palestinians in an open air prison and thus curtail their capacity to improve themselves.

36. The current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was not the result of a single policy, but was rather the product of a strategy to prevent the Palestinians from competing with Israelis and keep them as a captive market. In fact, the West Bank and Gaza had become the second largest market for Israeli products. The only way to unleash the capacities of the Palestinians and give them the opportunity to continue developing like the rest of the world was to end Israeli occupation of their territory.

37. **Mr. Elkhafif** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that UNCTAD could adopt either a sectoral approach or a bottom-up approach to the task. The latter approach would start at the household level and go up, while the former would take GDP as its starting point. Regardless of the approach, the task was substantial and would require the involvement of experts from multiple disciplines. He reiterated that UNCTAD was the sole United Nations agency capable of assessing the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people because of its proven expertise with regard to the Palestinian economy. All that it required was for the General Assembly to provide the necessary resources.

38. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that his delegation appreciated the efforts of UNCTAD to assess the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, despite the limited resources available to it. The Committee would do what it could to ensure that UNCTAD received the resources it required.

39. Recalling the presentations on the cost of occupation that had been made at the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Cairo on 6 and 7 February 2012, he said that it had been fascinating to note the difference in the approach taken in the study that had been carried out by the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and ARIJ and the study that had been carried out by the Alternative Information Centre, a Jerusalem-based non-governmental organization. In the former study, the authors had quantified the cost of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian economy across a range of economic categories and, as noted earlier by Mr. Elkhafif, had found that the loss suffered by the Palestinian economy was nearly $7 billion per year, an amount that was equivalent to approximately 85 per cent of the GDP of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The authors had concluded that, were the Israeli occupation to end, the Palestinian economy would be self-sufficient and would not require donor assistance. Indeed, one could imagine that, liberated from the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian economy might be able to grow several fold if donors continued to provide aid.

40. On the other hand, the authors of the Alternative Information Centre study had compared the per capita GDP of the West Bank to that of Jordan and had concluded that had the West Bank remained part of Jordan, the standard of living in the West Bank would now be equivalent to the standard of living in Jordan. Likewise, had Gaza remained part of Egypt, the standard of living in Gaza would now be equivalent to the standard of living in Egypt. However, since that was not the case, the authors had determined that, since 1967, the cumulative gap in per capita GDP between the Occupied Palestinian Territory, on the one hand, and Jordan and Egypt, on the other, was approximately $9.7 billion. Neither of those approaches, however, took into account the psychological and social effects of occupation on the Palestinian people, and it was necessary to find some method of measuring that and assigning an approximate monetary value to it.

41. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had collected millions of documents that detailed the

substantial losses suffered by Palestine refugees. Those losses, for which the refugees must be compensated, should be added to the total sum of the losses suffered by the Palestinian people.

42. Various actors, including, inter alia, the State of Palestine, UNCTAD, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, were currently collecting information on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation. It was important, however, to systematize those efforts in the future, so that comprehensive data were available when the time came to settle claims for damages.

43. Another important effort was the collection of information on the losses incurred as result of the construction by Israel of the separation wall. After several rounds of adjustments, stakeholders had agreed on a format for the claim form. Although that form captured a wide range of information, it was a challenge to capture the psychological suffering that displaced Palestinians had endured and the loss of public property suffered by the Palestinian Government. Another challenge was the slow pace at which claims were being verified. While some 50,000 claim forms had been collected to date, not more than 6,000 claims had been verified.

44. All of the valuable and indisputable information that was being collected would help to ensure that the Palestinian people were compensated at a level that was commensurate with the monstrosity of the crimes that had been committed against them by Israel.

45. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia), Vice-Chair, said that his delegation appreciated that work being done by UNCTAD on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. Indeed, the relevant facts were better expressed in figures. Those who were assessing and quantifying the cost of the Israeli occupation should therefore be given the resources they needed to carry out their critical work. He called on the Committee to help secure the required resources by appealing to those bodies that held the purse strings. The question of Palestine would not have remained unresolved for so long were it not for the lack of sympathy in certain forums and circles for the Palestinian people. The reports of UNCTAD and others on the cost of occupation must be brought to the attention of a wider audience not only within the United Nations, but also in other influential organizations. He hoped that the effort to appeal to the hearts and minds of the Israeli people would eventually make them realize that it was not logical for their country to continue occupying the territory of Palestine.

46. **The Chair** wondered how the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the establishment of related indicators had affected the work of those who were assessing and quantifying the cost of the Israeli occupation.

47. **Mr. Kubursi** (Professor Emeritus, McMaster University), recalling the comments of the observer for the State of Palestine, said that the one of the distinguishing elements of the study by the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and ARIJ was that it considered both the direct and indirect costs of the Israeli occupation. It was imperative for all those who were assessing the cost of occupation to adopt such an approach. Another important aspect of that study was its conclusion that the effort to measure and quantify the cost of occupation must be comprehensive and continuous. Responding to the question posed by the Chair, he said that development was at the very heart of the issue. The international community must therefore ask itself what must be done to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to development. Lastly, he supported the call of the representative of Namibia that those who were assessing and quantifying the cost of the Israeli occupation must be given sufficient resources to their work.

48. **Mr. Elkhafif** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) said that while any assessment of the cost of occupation should be produced by the United Nations, it was important for the Organization to work with national partners, such as the Palestinian Ministry for National Economy. Stakeholders must be prepared resist any challenges to the validity of such an assessment, whether in respect of data, methodology or any other aspect. All those involved in the effort were approaching it with the utmost seriousness because the assessment they produced would ultimately serve as an international reference. All contributions to the effort were welcome because they would strengthen the assessment. UNCTAD would continue to work on the issue, regardless of the level of resources available to it.

Other matters

49. The Chair said that the special meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would be held on 23 November 2015 and requested delegations to be represented at the ambassadorial level.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.